

Audio tapes unlock Peters' book

Has "Thriving on Chaos," Tom Peters' excellent 525-page book about riding the waves of change to business success, been sitting on your bookshelf for months — unread?

Well, Peters has come to the rescue. He has excerpted parts of his book on audiotapes under the title: "Thriving On Chaos — 45 Tactics For A Management Revolution."

Peters, the co-author of two other books that rocked American management — "In Search of Excellence" and "A Passion for Excellence" — is a good writer and an even better speaker.

He begins by breaking with his previous works and asserting that there are no excellent companies, only companies that are striving to excel in a world of chaos.

Peters' theory is that business conditions are so far-ranging and change is so rapid, that business people must constantly seek



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change if they are to succeed. As you listen to or read his work, you'll constantly be bombarded with amazing statements, such as: "You must innovate! If you're not innovative, you'll be out of business!"

Peters gives 45 lessons, or as he calls them prescriptions, for dealing with the chaos, and splits them into five chapters.

He starts at the bottom of the business pyramid with customers. He advocates product differentiation, highest quality and outstanding service to build this base.

He then moves onto lessons for speedy innovation, empowering

people, leadership and special systems to cope with the chaotic pace.

For example, he asserts that empowering people gives you the flexibility to handle change. That empowerment requires involving everyone in everything and constantly supporting people with training, giving them incentive pay and cutting away rules that tether them.

Peters' style is compelling and moves you to action. The man obviously feels passionately about what he's preaching, and his enthusiasm is contagious.

Although the material is aimed at large- and medium-sized companies, and many of the examples come from General Motors and the steel industry, the lessons here apply to small companies, too. In fact, smaller companies, which by nature have more flexibility, probably would find it easier to follow Peters' prescriptions and take ad-

vantage of the constant change in the business climate.

The tapes will get you involved in the material, and you can use the book to follow up on particular tips that inspire you. The set of six cassettes is available for \$54.95 from Nightingale Conant Corp. of Chicago. The book, published by Knopf, sells for \$19.95. I suggest you buy both.

The bottom line: Between the book and the tapes, I have to give "Thriving on Chaos" the highest recommendation. I suggest that you let every manager in your organization have a chance to absorb some of these revolutionary ideas.

Hillel Segal's previous Computer column now has been broadened to include evaluations of gadgets, seminars and books designed to enhance business productivity. Segal is a management consultant based in Boulder.